



SMOG CHECK ADVISORY

Official Publication of the California Department of Consumer Affairs/Bureau of Automotive Repair

September 1998

NOx Testing Underway as of September 9

NOx testing officially began September 9, and technicians are beginning to acquire real world experience in the diagnosis and repair of vehicles that fail as a result of NOx for the first time in California history.

"In our June edition, we said we would begin NOx testing as soon as shops, technicians, and equipment were ready," BAR Chief Marty Keller said. "As soon as that occurred, we moved into the final phase of the Smog Check program."

As he has in the past, Keller urged shops and technicians to watch for Electronic Transmission (ET) messages which BAR used to notify shops when NOx testing began.

At press time software updates were completed and other equipment issues were resolved which allowed the start-up of NOx testing.

According to statistics being collected since required Acceleration Simulation Mode (ASM) testing on the new BAR-97 Emission Inspection Systems (EIS) began on June 8, more than three million tests have been conducted. A breakdown of some of the statistics collected are included in a newly created column, **SNAPSHOT**, on page 4. ➡



First in a Series

DON'T SHOOT THE CAT...

by Pat Larson

For many years the poor catalytic converter (CAT) has been the most unnecessarily replaced smog component in the attempt to get a customer's vehicle to pass a Smog Check.

But in data collected in BAR's pilot Acceleration Simulation Mode (ASM) study in El Monte in 1994, only 13 percent of the vehicles repaired under the ASM test strategy actually needed catalytic converters replaced.

It is a tempting "quick fix" because it does provide a short-term reduction in emissions. More often than not, however, it may also result in the loss of a long-term customer. The actual problem will destroy that shiny new CAT and the customer will have to pay for a second CAT, as well as make additional repairs to correct the original problem. At the very least, the result will be a loss of confidence in both the shop and the technician.

Information gathered from BAR's Consumer Repair Education Workforce (CREW) interventions, documented undercover vehicle operations, and consumer complaints show that proper diagnosis too often is not being done under the hoods of vehicles at the engine. The long-term benefits of making a proper diagnosis, followed by a complete and proper repair, are improved driveability, better fuel mileage, extended engine life, a Smog Check certificate, and a long-term customer.

Until recently, hydrocarbon (HC) and carbon monoxide (CO) failures were the major focus of the Smog Check program. Now, however, technicians are required to diagnose and repair vehicles that fail because of high levels of oxides of nitrogen (NOx).

To begin to conduct a proper diagnosis to determine if a CAT is defective, a technician must consider the require-

ments of the various CATs, which include the following:

- single bed, oxidation only CO, HC;
- dual bed, reduction and oxidation NOx, CO, HC; and
- monolith, reduction and oxidation NOx, CO, and HC.

The precious metals used in the manufacture of CATs—platinum, rhodium, and palladium—will clean themselves if the input gases are in the correct ratios. That is why it is critical that a vehicle's fuel management system and air injection system are operating properly, going from slightly rich to slightly lean, and injecting air at the right places at the right times.

Both the dual bed and the monolith types of CAT need differing oxygen levels to perform the exhaust gas conversions. The platinum or palladium metals require high levels of oxygen to convert CO and HC into water and carbon dioxide. The rhodium element, however, only operates well in the absence of oxygen to convert NOx into NO and O₂. By comparison, the single bed CAT only works on the CO and HC.

Taking into account the unique features and needs of each type of CAT is the first step in conducting a proper diagnosis to determine if the CAT is alive and well. ➡

Pat Larson has been a BAR program representative since 1988. He is a member of BAR's Program Representative Advisory Committee, which is dedicated to providing repair and program advice to BAR management executives and Smog Check technicians and station owners.

In next month's issue: Second in a Series —"CAT DIAGNOSTIC METHODS"



Many Smog Check Stations Fail First Phase of Undercover Audits; 60 Others Win Praise

In the first phase of undercover audits conducted at Smog Check stations from January through April of 1998, 47 percent failed to perform a proper inspection, and almost half of those stations performed a "Manual Mode" test.

Unlike an "Official Inspection" or "Official Preinspection," a Manual Mode test does not prompt the technician to perform the visual or functional portions of the inspection. As a result, technicians using the Manual Mode test overlooked the visual and/or functional inducements used in the audits.

The results of the first phase audits, which sampled Test-Only, Test and Repair, Gold Shield Guaranteed Repair (GSGR), and Gross Polluter Certification (GPC) pilot stations statewide, were presented by BAR and industry leadership to 700 station owners and technicians at forums in northern and southern California.

"Everyone attending the forums was dismayed and disappointed at the findings of these audits," said BAR's Chief of Field Operations, Mike Vanderlaan, who conducted the audit program. "We all agreed that shops and technicians must take this program much more seriously if they plan to continue performing Smog Checks."

Also as part of the forums, Certificates of Acknowledgment were presented to the following stations that performed the audit inspections properly:

ANAHEIM

Ira Newman Automotive

APPLE VALLEY

Big Apple Automotive

ARCADIA

Roy Gasparini Union Service

BEVERLY HILLS

Butler Automotive Co., Inc.

BISHOP

DKR Automotive

BREA

Econo Lube N Tune (privately owned)

CAMARILLO

Barry's Auto Service

CANOGA PARK

West Valley Service Center

CANYON COUNTRY

Halsey's Auto Service

CARMICHAEL

Carmichael Honda

CHATSWORTH

McNally Chevron

CONCORD

Clayton Treat Smog Pros

COVINA

Covina Auto Service

CUPERTINO

DeAnza Smog & Auto Repair

ELK GROVE

Dennis Campbell's Union 76

FREMONT

Irvington Auto Service

FRESNO

Lamona Service Center, Inc.
Ted's Automotive Repair

HAYWARD

Fairway Park Gas & Auto Service

LAHABRA

Don Steves Chevrolet

LAGUANA HILLS

Elyas Leisure World Mobil

LANCASTER

Bob Howle Automotive

LIVERMORE

Accurate Auto Care

LOMITA

ARCO Smog Pros

LOS ANGELES

Ken's Union Oil Service
Loyola Automotive

MISSION HILLS

Chahayed Service, Inc.

MORGAN HILL

Monterey Auto Service

MORRO BAY

Main Street Chevron

MOUNTAIN VIEW

Precision Tune Auto Care

NORCO

Phillips Pontiac Mazda

NORTH HOLLYWOOD:

California Auto

OXNARD

Sun Arco Smog Pros

PALM SPRINGS

Kennard's Automotive
S & R Shell

PASADENA

Smog Pros: Toslin, Inc.

RANCHO CUCAMONGA

Haven's Unocal 76 Tire & Service Center

RANCHO SANTA FE

Rancho Santa Fe Mobil

RESEDA

Reseda Auto Electric

ROLLING HILLS ESTATES

Smog Pros: Silver Spur Service

SACRAMENTO

Car Care Center
Quality Tune Up Shop

SAN BERNARDINO

Rollings Chevron Auto Center

SAN DIEGO

Rosecrans Unocal 76
Seene's Automotive Service, Inc.
Tune Craft
University City Service Center

SAN FRANCISCO

Kashani Union
Pacific Heights Chevron

SAN JOSE

Taylor Automotive Service

SANTEE

D & R Automotive
Horsman Chevron

STOCKTON

Auto Tune & Brakes
ProTech Tuneup Centers

THOUSAND PALMS

Pete's Automotive

TORRANCE

George's Automotive
Walt's Auto Service

UPLAND

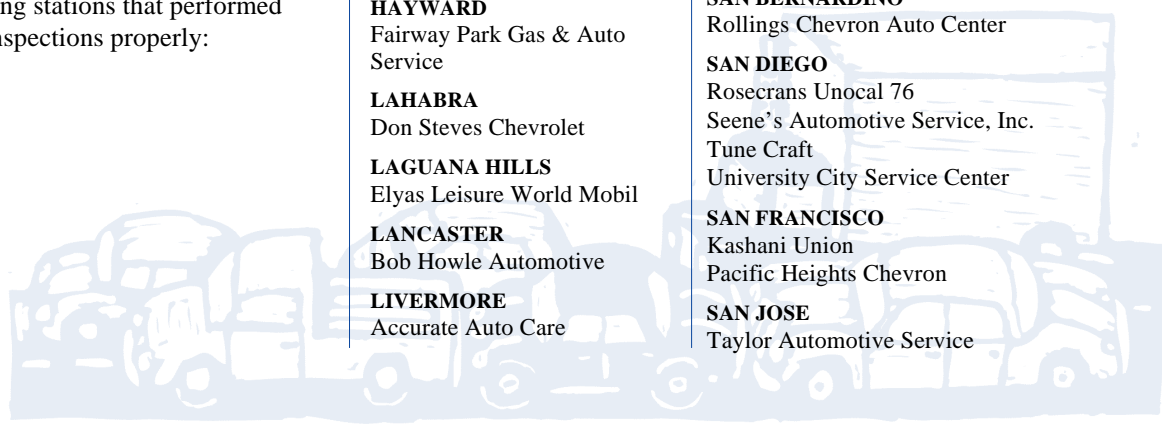
Upland Shell

WEST COVINA

Smog Pros

YORBA LINDA

Savi Tire & Auto Center



New Committee Establishing Award Criteria

BAR's Program Representative Advisory Committee (PRAC) is currently developing criteria they will use to publicly honor technicians and stations that are "Clearing The Air" about the new Smog Check Program.

"This will be a communications award, not an award for technical achievement," said BAR Field Representative Pat Larson, a spokesperson for the PRAC. "We'd like to reward those stations and individuals who are taking the time to 'clear the air' about this program."

Larson said the PRAC expects to announce within the next several weeks, the criteria stations and individuals will be required to meet to receive the award.

"Those of us who are out there inspecting stations and assisting technicians are well aware that many people are making a real effort to communicate with their customers and help them understand," Larson added. ➡



Using Your New Digital Oscilloscope

Wayne Brumett of BAR's Manuals and Publications Branch demonstrates the hand-held Digital Storage Oscilloscope (DSO), a tool that produces a live picture of electrical circuit activity. A graph of the electrical signal allows the technician to see exactly how the charge is moving through a circuit. Electrical signal voltage images over time can be used to determine voltage levels, and frequency and pulse width, to locate electronic glitches that create intermittent driveability problems, and to gauge the overall integrity of electrical circuits. ➡

Name & Address Change Notification Required

Licenses who change their name and/or address are required to notify DCA BAR's Licensing Division within 14 days. Here's how to do it.

- ▲ Put the change in writing and forward it along with your original Automotive Repair Dealer business registration and all associated station licenses (a photocopy of the business license may be posted at the place of business until the new license arrives); or
- ▲ Contact DCA/BAR's Licensing Division at (916) 322-4000 to request a change of name/address form. When you receive the form, complete and mail it, along with your original Auto

Repair Dealer business registration and all associated station licenses (a photocopy of the business license may be posted at the place of business until the new license arrives) to:

Licensing Division
400 R Street, Suite 3080
Sacramento, CA 95814

If you're a Smog Check technician at a testing site, ask the test proctor for a Change of Candidate Information form, fill it out and return it to the proctor. ➡

Back Issues of Smog Check Advisory Soon on the Web

Most back issues of the *Smog Check Advisory* will soon be available on the World Wide Web. If you are a technician or shop owner new to the Smog Check program, or if you are missing an issue and would like a copy, check out the Smog Check website at www.smogcheck.ca.gov. ➡



SNAPSHOT

Following are the Smog Check ASM Testing and Repair Cost Statistics collected since the program began on June 8.

Program Volume

Tests Conducted
Vehicles Tested
Vehicles Failed
Certificates Issued

JUNE

1,022,992 *
751,996
66,638 (8.9%)
672,556 (89.4%)

JULY

1,044,120 *
720,316
67,773 (9.4%)
638,996 (88.7%)

Type of Failure

Tailpipe:
Gross Polluters
Visual
Functional

51,049 (6.8%)
18,239 (2.4%)**
3,752 (.5%)
25,308 (3.4%)

52,864 (7.3%)
18,605 (2.6%)**
3,710 (.5%)
25,935 (3.6%)

Failure by Station Type

Test & Repair
GSGR
GPC
Test-Only
Other (fleets)

35,823 (7.2%)
19,444 (9.6%)
1,794 (12.8%)
9,559 (26.4%)
18 (4.3%)

36,125 (7.8%)
18,132 (9.7%)
2,114 (8.2%)
11,399 (27.7%)
3 (1.3%)

Consumer Assistance/Referee Centers

Tests
Failures
Gross Polluter Tests
Gross Polluter Failures
Certificates Issued
Cost Waivers Issued
Hardship Extensions Issued

1,909
1,188 (62.2%)
74
24 (32.4%)
1,276
265
303

2,006
1,027 (51.2%)
52
20 (38.5%)
1,255
160
133

Average Repair Costs

Vehicles Repaired
Average Cost (statewide)
Test & Repair Stations
GSGR Stations
GPC Stations

66,919
\$ 93
\$ 96
\$ 99
\$ 167

57,433
\$ 96
\$ 98
\$ 101
\$ 165

* Includes multiple tests on same vehicle.

** Subset of tailpipe failures.

Little Scoops

- **American Honda** has agreed to extend its warranty on emissions equipment to 14 years/150,000 miles for 290,000 1995-97 Hondas sold in California, inspect and repair emissions equipment at 50,000-75,000 and do free tune-up and oil changes while inspecting emissions equipment at 5,000-150,000 miles as part of an out-of-court agreement with the U.S. Government. According to the U.S. Attorney General's civil case, Honda allegedly "disabled" misfire monitoring devices on 1.6 million vehicles, which created the potential for excessive hydrocarbon emissions and violated the federal Clean Air Act. Affected (California Honda) vehicles include:
 - Accord V-6;
 - Acura NSX;
 - Acura 2.5 TL; and
 - All 1996-97 Hondas and Acuras, except Acura Integra Type R and Isuzu-built Acura and Honda Passport.

In another federal Clean Air Act case, **Ford Motor Co.** agreed to recall and reprogram 60,000 1997 (Federal) Econoline vans. It was accused of illegally setting emissions equipment to improve fuel economy and increasing NOx emissions at highway speeds on the vans.

Neither manufacturer admitted wrongdoing in the settlements.

- As we reported in the **August edition** of the *Smog Check Advisory*, because of temporary technical difficulties in issuing licenses and badges, Smog Check technicians who have passed the examination and received a letter from the DCA confirming their positive exam results may continue to perform inspections until the license and badge arrives by posting the "pass letter" and manually entering the new and/or renewed license number into the BAR-90 Test Analyzer System (TAS) or the BAR-97 Emission Inspection System (EIS) machines.

- **Registration booklets** for the November Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) exams are in the mail. Registration deadline is October 2, 1998, and exams are scheduled for November 5 and 10, 1998.
- **BAR-97** units manufactured by Worldwide Environmental have received provisional BAR certification, and stations may call their nearest BAR field office to have the equipment initialized.
- **BAR staff** participated in the first national conference on the future of the auto repair industry held September 2-4 in Anaheim. Issues covered at the conference, *Automotive Repair Leadership 2000: Strategies for Success*, included recruiting new talent, improving the industry's professionalism and image, and improving education and training on a national level. More than 100 representatives from across the nation attended. ➔

THE BOTTOM LINE

- ▲ **108** Cut score on the current smog exam.
- ▲ **81.8** Percent of technicians who passed EA Smog Check exam in July 1998.
- ▲ **6,960** Technicians completed the BAR-97 eight-hour Transition Training.
- ▲ **2,871** Technicians completed the 20-hour update course (as of July 1998).
- ▲ **2,214** Gold Shield Guaranteed Repair stations (as of July 31, 1998).
- ▲ **389** Gross Polluter Certification (GPC) Pilot Stations (as of August 24, 1998).
- ▲ **110** Test-Only stations with 182 lanes (as of July 1998).

STAY TUNED

For notification about possible changes to the Smog Check program as the result of new legislation currently pending action by Governor Wilson...



DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS AND CITATIONS

The following is a list of citations issued and disciplinary actions taken against Smog Check stations and technicians over the last several months.

Previously, this information has been published in the *Repair Reporter*, the Bureau of Automotive Repair's sister publication for all automotive repair dealers. However, violations of the Smog Check program laws and regulations will now be published monthly in the *Smog Check Advisory*. Under Business and Professions Code Section 9882.4, the DCA/BAR is required to publish disciplinary actions taken against licensees and registrants. Since the *Repair Reporter* has traditionally been published only twice a year, a backlog of unpublished citations and disciplinary actions has occurred, resulting in the untimely release of information to the public and industry.

While the *Smog Check Advisory* will publish only violations of the laws and regulations by Smog Check stations and technicians, the *Repair Reporter* will continue to publish violations by other auto repair stations and technicians engaged in general auto repair work. In addition, plans are being made to publish the *Repair Reporter* quarterly (beginning in 1999) rather than semi-annually as a result of industry recommendations made at joint BAR/Industry workshops on automotive-related issues held statewide in March and April. →

Disciplinary Actions

ECONO SMOG N TUNE

— El Monte

ABBAS HASSAN MOUSSAOUI,
Partner

HOSAIN KOBAESSI, Partner

Order: ARD registration (AL 181277), Smog Check Station License (RL 181277), Smog Check Technician License (EU 043080), ARD registration (AM 192144), Smog Check Station License (RM 192144) are

hereby revoked; Smog Check Station License (RM 192144) and ARD Registration (AM 192144) revocation stayed: 5 years' probation on the following conditions: obey laws and regulations; report to BAR quarterly; report any financial interest in any auto repair facility; retain all parts replaced but not returned; submit any proposed advertising copy, whether revised or new, 30 days prior to its use; provide BAR unrestricted access to inspect all vehicles undergoing repairs or inspections. (04/17/98)

GOLDEN WRENCH AUTOMOTIVE

— Lake Forest

REZA KUCHEKI, Partner

ALI MOHAMMAD MADAEN,
Partner

Order: ARD registration and Smog Check Station License revoked; Reza Ray Kucheki — Smog Check Technician License revoked. (05/12/98)

LE, HUNG T. — Escondido

Order: Application for licensure as an Advanced Emission Specialist is hereby denied. (05/15/98)

LONE TREE AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE & REPAIR — Antioch

MICHELE D. CANNITO, Owner

FRED LOUIS BUCH, Employee
Order: ARD registration permanently invalidated; Smog Check Station License revoked; Buch — Smog Check Technician License revoked. (05/13/98)

MODERN TECH ENGINEERING

— Aliso Viejo

RAY R. KUCHEKI, a.k.a. REZA

RAY KUCHEKI, Owner

Order: ARD registration and Smog Check Station License revoked; Smog Check Technician License revoked. (05/12/98)

PETE'S SMOG — Pacoima

PETER JAMES BARTOLOTTI,
Owner

Order: ARD registration and Smog Check Station License revoked. (05/12/98)

RICO'S AUTO SMOG & SERVICES

— Los Angeles

BERTHA ALICIA RICO, Owner

Order: ARD registration permanently invalidated; Smog Check Station License revoked. (05/12/98)

SEVEN BROTHERS AUTO REPAIR

— South Gate

Wilbur H. Hooker, Owner/Employee

Order: ARD registration and Smog Check Station License revoked; ARD revocation stayed: 5 years' probation on the following conditions: obey laws and regulations; report to BAR quarterly; report any financial interest in any auto repair facility; 30 day suspension; post a sign stating reasons for suspension; pay BAR \$9,000; Smog Check Technician License revoked. (04/14/98)

SO, SIENGHAY — Stockton

Order: Advanced Emission Specialist Technician license application of respondent Sienghay So is denied. (02/03/98)

UNIVERSAL SMOG — Los Angeles

JUAN ARRIAGA, Owner

Order: ARD registration and Smog Check Station License revoked. (05/12/98)

VERMONT GARAGE — Carson

HUGO ALBERTO VECCHI, Owner

Order: ARD registration permanently invalidated; Smog Check Station License revoked; any other license issued in the name of Hugo Albert Vecchi revoked. (05/12/98)

VILLA, ALBERT — Compton

Order: Smog Check Technician License revoked. (05/12/98)



Smog Check Station Citations

FACILITY NAME	ADDRESS	CITY	ZIP	LVL	ARD NUMBER	CITATION NUMBER	ASSESS AMOUNT	ASSESS DATE	DATE MAILED
Morro Bay Shell	1840 Main St.	Morro Bay	93442	1	AL175382	980435	250		04/20/98
Foothill Texaco	3 Santa Rosa St.	San Luis Obispo	93405	1	AC171644A	980437	250		04/20/98
B C Smogs	301 W Ocean Ave.	Lompoc	93436	1	AB158688B	980277	250	03/03/98	12/30/97
Bob Andrews Automotive	234 E Haley St.	Santa Barbara	93101	1	AF154264F	980109	250	11/05/97	09/08/97
Bob Andrews Automotive	234 E Haley St.	Santa Barbara	93101	2	AF154264G	980359	750		02/11/98
GM Automotive	401 1/2 Chapala St.	Santa Barbara	93101	1	AL143245D	980142	250	12/12/97	10/09/97
Muñoz Union Service	1101 E Clark Ave.	Santa Maria	93455	1	AC171779	970197	250	02/27/97	12/12/96
Muñoz Union Service	1101 E Clark Ave.	Santa Maria	93455	1	AC171779A	980069	750		08/14/97
Tyerman's Automotive	221 N Russell	Santa Maria	93454	1	AJ169030	980121	1,500	11/18/97	09/24/97
Smog Doctor	2270 Camden Ave.	Campbell	95008	1	AC171682A	980123	250	10/28/97	09/24/97
Smog Doctor	2270 Camden Ave.	Campbell	95008	2	AC171682B	980363	750	04/07/98	02/23/98
Montgomery Ward & Co. Inc.	1600 Saratoga Ave.	San Jose	95129	1	AN058608D	980154	250	11/14/97	10/09/97
Greenslip Inc.	815 E El Camino Real	Sunnyvale	94087	1	AA192719	980055	250		08/04/97
Greenslip Inc.	815 E El Camino Real	Sunnyvale	94087	2	AA192719A	980227	750		12/15/97
Freedom Tune-Up	1400 Freedom Blvd. #A	Watsonville	95076	1	AC101050D	980413	25		03/27/98
Joe's Automotive	2010 Railroad Ave.	Redding	96001	1	AJ162840C	980224	250	01/22/98	12/05/97
Joe's Automotive	2010 Railroad Ave.	Redding	96001	2	AJ162840D	980405	750		03/20/98
King Automotive	1893 Eureka Way	Redding	96001	1	AK163140D	970416	250	07/15/97	05/27/97
King Automotive	1893 Eureka Way	Redding	96001	1	AK163140E	980127	750		03/27/98
Preventive Maintenance Svc.	1701 Springs Road	Vallejo	94591	1	AL143197C	970434	250	08/12/97	06/26/97
Auto World	1312 La Loma Ave.	Modesto	95354	1	AF184438	980218	250	01/20/98	12/01/97
Ceres Smog and Tune	1419 Angie Ave. #E	Modesto	95351	1	AA192548	980216	250		10/21/97
David's Auto Tech	1013 N Emerald Ave. #C	Modesto	95351	1	AA187410	980222	250	01/08/98	12/05/97
Fargo Auto Parts & Repair	1557 Morgan Road	Modesto	95351	1	AH033371G	980350	250	03/16/98	02/06/98
Jack Wristen's Automotive	1162 Scenic Dr.	Modesto	95350	1	AB152106D	980040	250	10/08/97	07/29/97
Maurice's Auto Repair	1729 Yosemite Blvd.	Modesto	95354	1	AC159041	980220	250	01/12/98	12/01/97
Penny Wise Auto Tech & Smog	1411 Paradise Road	Modesto	95351	1	AF172876	980211	250		11/17/97
Smog Masters	1315 D St.	Modesto	95354	1	AG184696	980209	250	12/29/97	11/17/97
Speedee Oil Change & Tune-Up	1343 Coffee Road	Modesto	95355	1	AA176505	970415	250	11/12/97	05/27/97
Sierra Unocal	1208 S Mooney	Visalia	93277	1	AM151010C	980398	250	04/23/98	03/06/98
R K Smog Service	341 N Dawson Dr. #B	Camarillo	93012	1	AK128017K	980144	250	12/01/97	10/09/97
Airport Shell	1465 W Fifth St.	Oxnard	93030	1	AD171970	980119	250	11/14/97	09/23/97
Arceo's Smog Automotive	568 Pacific Ave.	Oxnard	93030	1	AE153929C	980214	250	12/23/97	11/20/97
Auto Works	1136 Patterson Road	Oxnard	93035	1	AB171088A	980135	250	12/12/97	10/03/97
Auto Works	1136 Patterson Road	Oxnard	93035	2	AB171088B	980433	750		04/20/98
Oxnard Self Service	700 S Oxnard Blvd.	Oxnard	93030	1	AH119514J	980042	250	08/22/97	07/30/97
Tune Ups Plus	540 East 5th St.	Oxnard	93030	1	AJ174536A	980213	25	01/26/98	11/20/97
Tune Ups Plus	2915 Telegraph Road	Ventura	93003	1	AE172694	970205	1,500	03/14/97	01/08/97
Hildebrand Auto Electric Inc.	454 College St.	Woodland	95695	1	AA075097C	980403	250	03/31/98	03/18/98
Smogger Bob	614 3rd St.	Marysville	95901	1	AJ185324	980356	250	04/16/98	02/11/98



is published by the

**California Department
of Consumer Affairs'
Bureau of Automotive Repair**
400R Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

BAR FIELD OFFICE PHONE NUMBERS

Bakersfield (805) 833-6304
Riverside (909) 782-4250
Canoga Park (818) 596-4400
Sacramento (916) 255-4200
Culver City (310) 410-0024
San Jose (408) 277-1860
Fresno (209) 445-5015
South El Monte .. (818) 575-6934
Fullerton (714) 680-7851
Hayward (510) 785-1961
Oceanside (760) 439-0942

DCA Cashiering (916) 322-7002
DCA Licensing ... (916) 322-4010
ET Help Desk (916) 255-4476
MCI (800) 731-SMOG
(Then press 5 for technical support)

**Consumer Assistance and
Referee Centers: (800) 622-7733**

DCA HOTLINE: (800) 952-5210

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage
PAID
Sacramento, CA
Permit No. 2083

Smog Check Advisory

September 1998

ISSUES & ANSWERS

The Issues & Answers column is for readers to ask questions about topics that are of general interest to the auto repair industry and the Smog Check program. Answers to your questions will be researched and published here. You are encouraged to submit your questions to:

**Smog Check Advisory
P.O. Box 188978
Sacramento, CA 95818**

All questions must be accompanied by a name, address, and telephone number and will be verified before publication. Questions will be answered and published on a space-available basis. — The Editor

Q I don't recall anything official coming down about a change in cost limits. The normal gossip, but I want to always wait till the directive is in my hand and my hands are empty. Recently a referee told a Gross Polluter—who spent his \$450 to repair—that we charged him beyond what the state now requires. Since when? Phone calls to BAR locally and in Sacramento turned up even more conflicting information and left us scratching our heads with one very unhappy customer. How about using the TAS screen to confirm rapid changes in the law?
Thomas Pribanic, San Rafael.

A In the *Smog Check Advisory*, we often have urged shops and technicians to check their test analyzer screens early and often for electronic transmission (ET) messages, especially when we expect a significant change in the program to take effect. In addition, all the current information can be found on BAR's web site at www.smogcheck.ca.gov which is updated regularly. If you are not receiving your messages, please call your local field office.



Visit DCA/BAR's Web site: www.smogcheck.ca.gov or www.smogcheck.org